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THE  
YOUNG CHRISTIAN WARNED,  
OR  
PASTORAL COUNSEL  
AGAINST  
CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD

BY THE  
REV. J. E. ROCKWELL,  
BROOKLYN, N. Y.



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# PREFACE.



THE experience of the writer of this little treatise, as a Pastor, especially among those who have but recently commenced the Christian life, has led him to attempt what he sincerely wishes were done by an abler hand. He has written it in the hope that it may prove useful as a manual to be placed in the hands of those who, although connected with the church, are in constant danger from the causes which are here pointed out. If it shall be the means of warning any of the perils amid which multitudes have made shipwreck of usefulness and happiness and hope, and of directing to the only way of escape, his object will have been accomplished.

To the beloved youth of his own charge, to the young Christians who, in the recent outpourings of the Spirit, have been brought into the light and hope of the gospel, he commends this volume with the earnest prayer, that God may sanctify them wholly, and make them chosen vessels to declare his glory.

BROOKLYN, *March* 1859.

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# THE YOUNG CHRISTIAN WARNED.



## CHAPTER I.

### INTRODUCTORY.

“Ponder the path of thy feet and let all thy ways be established.” “Be not conformed to this world.” “Young men, likewise, exhort to be sober minded.”

No class of temptations furnishes a more serious hindrance to the spiritual progress of the Christian, and especially of the young Christian, than those which arise from his social pleasures and the ordinary amusements of the world. He can understand the necessity of integrity, of temperance, and purity, and of abstaining from acts which

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are evidently and undeniably vicious, but when warned of the dangers which may arise from social pleasures in themselves innocent, and from recreations which are not strictly prohibited in the word of God, he reluctates to receive the friendly monition, and too often passes on in a career of folly, which leaves him in a backslidden state from which he can be recovered only by a long and bitter experience of distress, and sorrow, and deep repentance. The Christian should therefore pause and ponder the path of his feet, ere he enters upon any course, or engages in any act, which has not the direct sanction of his own conscience, enlightened by the law of God. If upon calm and serious reflection, he is assured that it will meet the approval of his heavenly

Father, let him enter upon it and engage in it heartily.

It is the part of wisdom to look upon the things of this life, not in the delusive and gorgeous colourings, in which the world or even our own fancy may paint them, but in the sober reasonings of a mind, which considers the results of our conduct and follows out a course of action to its natural consequences.

The excellent and pious Hervey was once travelling in company with a lady wholly devoted to the world and its amusements, who was defending the theatre and expatiating upon the pleasure she always derived from its fascinating scenes. She remarked that there was a pleasing excitement in the anticipation and preparations for the play, that while there these anticipations were more than realized in the

brilliancy and interest of the scene before her, and that when it was over there was still a pleasure in reflecting upon what she had heard and witnessed.

Mr. Hervey, having patiently listened to her warm and glowing panegyric, remarked, with his wonted mildness, "There is one pleasure, madam, which you seem to have forgotten in your enumeration." She eagerly asked what that could be, for she thought she had included them all. With unusual gravity and solemnity of manner, he replied, "The pleasure, madam, it will give you on your death bed." The reproof went to her heart, and she remained silent to the end of the journey. But the truth had reached her conscience. The solemn words were sounding in her ears wherever she went; and the gay lover of the world



and its vain amusements at length became earnest in the pursuit of those pleasures, which can alone give satisfaction when we come to die, and which shall be continued and perpetuated in heaven.

Here is afforded a test to which every act and pleasure of life may be safely brought: will it fit me for a dying hour, and for the solemn scenes of the judgment?

Nor need this question be, to us, the source of ceaseless gloom; nor will it rob us of every cheerful thought and emotion, to live and act in view of eternity.

God has not spread around our path the bounties of his providence, nor given to us social affections, nor placed us in the midst of a world full of beauty, where every forest is vocal with the

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choral songs of joy, and every flower is wreathed with smiles; that we should turn from them all with an ascetic gloom, and hide ourselves in cloisters and caves, and war with all that is lovely and joyous.

The mind is not always to be strained by serious thought and duty. There are times when it needs and demands healthful recreation, when it needs to be unbent and released from its more earnest labours. The student cannot always, without danger, task his mental powers with severe study. There are hours when he must lay his work aside, and be again a child. And the same rule applies to all the phases of human life. It is, however, of the utmost importance that the Christian fully comply with the command, "*Be not conformed to this world.*" And yet there

is an acknowledged difficulty in defining the limits of Christian liberty, and in knowing where is the line which separates innocence from guilt, in our contact with the world. While there are courses of conduct which are distinctly marked and recognized, as plain violations of the law of God, there are customs of the world which are not only harmless but praise-worthy, and to which the Christian may properly conform. There are social pleasures, schemes for the intellectual improvement of society, and healthful recreations, in which the child of God may join with entire safety. The gospel does not require of him to array himself in grotesque and ill-shaped garments, for fear of conforming to the world in its fashions. It does not ask him to renounce all exercise of the taste and

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the imagination, because men, who have no love for God, admire works of taste and art. The Christian may find pleasure in the study of a finished painting, or the exquisite design of the sculptor, or may listen with delight to the strains of music, and yet live in intimate communion with God, and be guiltless of any sinful conformity to the world. Religion does not change the intellectual and social nature of man by substituting new powers and faculties. It refines and purifies and elevates the whole being. So that among those who have been most distinguished at the bar, or in the councils of the nation, or among the supporters of literature, and art, and science, have been men who have by grace been made new creatures in Christ.

Nor does religion require that man

should be a hermit or a monk, and, in a life of austerity and seclusion, live at war with all our social feelings and habits.

Our Saviour, whose example we are to imitate, was often the invited guest of Publicans and Pharisees, and with no rigid austerity sat with them at their feasts.

He mingled with them not alone in the temple and the synagogue, but became their guest, and sat with them in their houses, at their social entertainments.

In the arrangements of this world both the righteous and the wicked meet together, and God has designed that they should live and act together, and exert a mutual influence, the one upon the other, either for good or evil. Still more it is evident that in the inter-

course of life, and the social interchange of thought and feeling that thus takes place, the mind is not always to be tasked, but may unbend itself and find in innocent and healthful recreation that rest which it daily requires. Even gladness, and joy, and mirth, are not only not prohibited, but approved, and the mind and heart allowed to give utterance to those emotions. Here then are we met by those who profess to be guided by the laws of Christ, with this question, *To what extent may the Christian mingle with the world, and enjoy its recreations, without incurring guilt and the charge of inconsistency in his conduct?*

Some appear to act as though there were no line of demarcation between the church and the world, except that which is made at the table of the Lord,



and if reminded that, in their conformity to the world, they are passing the limits of Christian consistency; will shelter themselves under the fact that the amusements to which they are attached, are nowhere prohibited in the word of God; and will seek to silence rebuke by the question which they seem to think unanswerable, "What harm is there in them?" It cannot be denied that there is, in many members of the visible church, a sad perversion of conscience upon the subject of fashionable amusements; or at least a wide difference in their conduct in this respect, and that of many who deservedly rank high, as earnest, faithful, and consistent Christians. The opera, the theatre, the ball-room, the card-table, and kindred amusements, have sometimes found advocates among those

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professing godliness. It has been said in their defence that the Scriptures nowhere prohibit them, and that they are not in themselves sinful, and that they are far less hurtful than many actions which others perform, who still condemn these fashionable recreations.

This may be true. Such amusements existed in the times of the early church, and yet they are nowhere especially and by name prohibited; for it is evident that the apostles took it for granted, that the Christian had (so to speak) a *spiritual instinct* which would lead him to reject what was evil and hurtful in his contact with the world, so that it was needful only to lay down general principles to govern his conduct.

It is true also that there may be worse defects in Christian character,



than an undue fondness for vain and trifling pleasures. He who spends his hours of leisure in propagating a vile and wicked slander, or in running up and down as a talebearer, and so marring the peace of the church, or who is guilty of overreaching in his business, gives no more and perhaps less evidence of the existence of grace in the heart, than he who is seen amid the assemblies of the gay and thoughtless, mingling with them in the amusements which the world has appropriated to itself. Yet the morals of the Scripture do not teach us that one wrong affords excuse for, or palliates another, or changes the immutable principles of right, by which every child of God should be guided. The great question, which every one is bound to answer, is not *how far* he may live away from

God and yet be a Christian, nor *how near* he may imitate the world and yet maintain his standing in the church; but how he may most honour his Saviour and promote the interests of his cause and the salvation of souls. And the great rule of Christian life is, "Whether ye eat or drink, or whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

This simple test, to which all our actions should be brought, indicates to us a sure and safe principle to guide us in our intercourse with the world. We are bound to honour God in all things, and so far as our influence extends, to induce others to love and serve him. This we can do neither by a rigid and monkish austerity that leads us to war with all that is lovely and gladsome; nor by a sinful conformity to the world, in all its maxims, and

customs, and amusements. Where then lies this golden mean? How may a Christian judge of his actions, whether they be innocent or sinful, when the word of God has not clearly decided the question for him?

It is evident that many courses of conduct not expressly forbidden in the Scriptures, are yet opposed to the spirit of God's holy law. It requires but little reflection to be convinced that actions, in themselves innocent, may under certain circumstances become sin. Even prayer to God may be so offered as to be offensive in his sight, and be the source of cursing and not of blessing. Our divine Redeemer pronounced a wo upon the Pharisees, who for a pretence made long prayers, and put on an appearance of sanctity, while the heart yet festered with pride

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and hypocrisy. Their prayers were sins. And if circumstances may thus change apparent virtue into vice, who does not see that other objects, in themselves innocent, or which God's word has not pronounced sin, may be the procuring cause of his sore displeasure?

It is the purpose therefore of this essay to set forth some plain and simple principles which may be of use, especially to the young Christian, in enabling him to judge rightly of the moral character and influence of those recreations to which the world invites him, and for which it is ready to offer its apologies.

## CHAPTER II.

### SCRIPTURAL TESTS OF CONDUCT.

“Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?  
By taking heed thereto according to thy word.”  
“Thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might  
not sin against thee.”

I PROPOSE in this chapter to suggest a few evident principles in Christian casuistry, which may assist us in determining when any course of action, or system of amusement, or recreation, becomes sinful, though not strictly prohibited in the word of God. The Bible is our only guide; and from it we may derive rules of conduct applicable to all the affairs of life. To its light our conscience must be brought,

that it may be properly fitted to decide upon our actions, and to be an unerring guide in all our intercourse with the world.

I. The first rule to which we would refer, is that an action becomes sinful when it unfits us for the performance of religious duty. God has assigned to us various tests of obedience, which are evidences of the presence of his Spirit, and the fruits of faith in his Son. And it is our duty, at all times, to cherish that frame of mind that shall fit us for the discharge of these religious obligations. Nor are we at liberty to engage in any act on which we may not ask God's blessing, or in which it would be inappropriate to seek his guidance and direction. Thus it is the duty of the Christian to cherish always the spirit of prayer, to cultivate that

disposition which shall fit him to approach the mercy-seat, and which shall give him a relish for communion with his Maker. Whatever unfits him for this, and makes it distasteful to him, whatever inevitably and certainly tends to draw his thoughts and desires away from God, makes him a stranger to his closet, and interferes with his seasons of secret devotion, is an enemy to his best interests, and if continued and indulged becomes itself a sin. It was this truth which our Saviour taught us when he said, "If thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee." Whatever interferes with our duty to God and to our own souls, is to be parted with, though it be the dearest idol of our hearts. Here then is the first test to which we may bring our pursuits and pleasures. If we find



ourselves under their power and influence, loving less and less the service of God; if they interfere with our attendance upon the sanctuary, and the ordinary means of grace; if they step in between us and the place of prayer; if they hinder us from reading the word of God; if they are stealing our hearts away from the society of our brethren, and indisposing us to converse on heavenly and divine things, and insensibly draw off our affections from Christ and his service, when cherished and entertained by us, they are a snare and thus a sin. And our own Christian instincts will lead us to abandon such pleasures, though they may have the semblance of innocence, and be unrebuked in the word of God, as of themselves sinful.

II. The second rule of Christian



casuistry might be included under the first head, but in its importance, demands a separate consideration. Whatever leads us into secret or open sin, if indulged, becomes itself sinful. We are commanded to pray, Lead us not into temptation: and what we incorporate with our petitions we must carry into practice. We have no right, wantonly, to place ourselves in situations where we may be led into sin either in thought, word, or action. The man who is in danger of relapsing into habits of intemperance, after having been in part reformed, may, by a single taste of the wine cup, or even a visit to his old haunts, awaken his slumbering appetite which may again overpower and master him. While therefore in itself there is no sin in taking wine, and while many a one may pass

with impunity through the place where strong drink is sold, the man who should do this in the full knowledge of its results upon him, would be guilty of sin in thus voluntarily placing himself in the reach of temptation. Varied illustrations of this principle might be adduced were it needful. But the rule bears in itself the evidence of its truth. And it is applicable to every circumstance of life. When a man finds that certain situations always lead him to sin, he is guilty of sin when he voluntarily places himself within the reach of the temptation. The very act of going thither must be offensive in the eyes of Him who requires of us that "we abstain from the very appearance of evil." We have no right to tamper or parley with temptation, or to place ourselves where such appeals may be

made to our senses as shall in all probability excite within us thoughts of sin, or lead us to commit that which we know God has positively forbidden.

III. All courses of action which naturally tend to lead others to sin become wrong when followed by the Christian. Jesus Christ, the great law-giver, has cautioned us against offences, and pronounced grievous woes upon him who shall offend one of his little ones.

Such are our social relations that all our words and deeds have a direct influence upon the character of our fellow men. Unconsciously often, are we touching those springs of moral action, little appreciating the power which lies hidden even in the daily acts and occurrences of life. Personal influence, like the great forces by which nature

carries on her operations, is often quiet and almost unnoticed. Men are often disposed to give too much credit to the more palpable and demonstrative agencies which they see around them, and greatly misjudge the power of such means in the accomplishment of good or evil. In the moral, as in the physical world, the most powerful agents are usually most noiseless and quiet. It is not so much what a man professes, as what he is and does, that constitutes the sum of his personal influence. Many a man seems to possess two characters. The one is found in his public words and professions, and the other in his life and actions. How is it that an individual often has little or no power for good, while so far as his creed is concerned he appears well, except it be that the influence which he

is exerting in his daily exhibition of spirit and disposition, is far more potent for evil than all his well formed professions? The world looks at his daily life as the proper index of what he is. Thus his conduct is marked and observed, and is exerting its influence upon all by whom his example is seen. Nor is there one in the church, however limited may be the sphere of his action, who is not thus shedding around him influences which will be felt for ever. They glide along with him through life, they enter eternity and will there be recognized in all their power and intensity. All his conduct is narrowly watched by the world. His light cannot be hid. Wherever he goes it is seen. If it be a pure reflection of the love and grace of Christ, it will be recognized by every mind that it reaches; if it be only a

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false glare that bewilders and misleads, it shines as far and is seen by as many.

And he is responsible for the influence which he thus exerts upon the world. Whatever therefore tends to diminish the essential difference between the righteous and the wicked, or to influence others to sin, or to give occasion for the world to doubt the power and efficacy of the gospel in changing the heart and life, cannot be followed and cherished by the Christian without incurring guilt. We have no right to place a stumbling block in the way of others. The soul is too valuable to be jeopardized by the indulgence of what we may deem harmless and innocent. The spirit of Paul was that which every Christian is bound to cherish, when he declared, "If meat

make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." He would abstain from what was both innocent and lawful, if thereby a soul might be led into sin. And although the principle he laid down has too often been pressed into the service of bigotry, and of a narrow-minded adherence to certain customs, seeking to mould and carve the ideas of a nobler and higher type of Christianity to its own opinions and prejudices; still, when rightly interpreted, it is that which should govern our conduct in all the affairs of life.

It may be safe for me to indulge in the daily use of wine at my table. I may perhaps be free from all danger of acquiring any undue love of strong drink thereby. But I should hesitate long ere I indulged in such a practice,



when I remembered that the eyes of children were upon me, who, encouraged by my example, might think themselves free to follow it, and thus be led peradventure to a life of vice—a drunkard's grave. Nor should I voluntarily engage in any other course of conduct which should lead others into sin. The fact that it becomes to them a temptation, is enough to stamp upon what, in other circumstances, might be harmless, a guilty character, that should lead me to avoid it, as offensive in the sight of God.

IV. Lastly, the Christian is guilty of an undue and sinful conformity to the world, when he engages in those scenes of pleasure and amusement which the world has appropriated exclusively to itself, and regards as a *test* of conformity thereto. There are



scenes, in which pleasure is the great and only object ; where God is forgotten, and where every professing Christian who enters the circle, might well hear the whisper of his own conscience, "What doest thou here?" In these scenes no difference can be discerned between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not ; and over their portal the world has inscribed, "All who enter here are part of us." When one who professes to be the disciple of Christ is united to their assemblies, he is at once regarded as having left the ranks of his Master's friends, and for the time at least, forgotten his vows and obligations, and laid aside his pilgrim's staff and sandals, and consented to be numbered with the children of the world. It is evident that he sins who forgets the great

command of his Saviour, "Be not conformed to this world"—and who becomes so connected with it as to present no evidence that he has ever professed to have been separated therefrom. Then he brings reproach upon that sacred name with which he is called, and leads an ungodly and gainsaying world to pour contempt upon the blessed principles by which he professes to be guided. He breaks over the last barrier which the world has itself placed between it and the church—between religion and worldly pleasures—between holiness and sin.

These simple rules in Christian casuistry, while they may be open to the cavils of those who are guided by principles of worldly policy, are nevertheless such as must commend themselves to all who regard the word of God as

the only rule of faith and practice. They are in entire accordance with the teachings of the holy Scriptures.

Every act of life may safely be brought to these tests : Will it unfit me for duty ? Will it lead me to sin ? May it lead others to sin ? Is it a recognized badge of conformity to the world ? And if we submit to these rules many of the amusements and pleasures which the world calls harmless, shall we not find them to be sins, when indulged in by the professed child of God ?

Can they bear the scrutiny of a conscience enlightened by the word and Spirit of God ? Are they promotive of personal piety, and can one go from them to his closet and enjoy sweet and intimate communion with God, or to the table of the Lord and feel no

sense of inappropriateness in his position as he looks up therefrom, and sees amid the spectators of that solemn ordinance, his companions with whom he but lately figured at the opera or the theatre, or whose partner he was at the dance or the card-table? Are not such scenes often the sure incentives to sin, both in ourselves and others, and are they not recognized as a badge of conformity to the world in its maxims and customs? I am not deciding what may be plainly forbidden or not forbidden in the Scriptures. I do not seek to call this custom or that pleasure, innocent or sinful. I would but leave it with the conscience of the reader, to settle the matter in view of the great principles of the gospel, and in the light of God's word. Let him subject his pleasures and

recreations to these simple tests, and if he finds that they will meet them, let him freely engage therein; or if otherwise he is assured that when so weighed they are found wanting, let him honestly and cheerfully renounce them as offensive to God, and injurious to his own highest interests.

## CHAPTER III.

THE WORLD VIEWED IN THE LIGHT OF  
ETERNITY.

“ But the end of all things is at hand ; be ye therefore sober and watch unto prayer.” “ Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be, in all holy conversation and godliness ?”

ONE who enjoyed more of earthly happiness and glory than any man can now hope to attain, who surrounded himself with every luxury that earth could afford, who “ got to himself men singers, and women singers, and the delights of the sons of men,” has left on record his own affecting testimony of the utter incapacity of all the pleasures

of life to afford solid comfort to the soul, and written over them all, "Vanity of vanities." They could not meet the exigencies of his spiritual nature, nor fill the mind with that food which it craves. When therefore towards the close of life he reviewed its scenes and pleasures in the light which eternity began to shed upon his path, he gave to the world the results of his experience, and warned the young of the dangers which would attend them, if they gave themselves up to seek after worldly pleasure, and of the disappointment which they would surely meet in its pursuit.

Summoning before him the youth in all his round of enjoyment, he uttered the solemn warning, "Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth,



and walk in the ways of thy heart, and in the sight of thine eyes; but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment." He would not, and did not teach him to go through life, warring with all that is lovely and cheerful, turning away from all that is pleasant and genial, rejecting all that can please the taste or charm the senses, and refusing pleasure, and happiness, and recreation, when the providence of God calls him to it, and spreads it before him. But he would have him, amid all the enjoyments of life, use the good things of this world with moderation, and remember the life to come, and the judgment to which we are all hastening, when every act of life must be distinctly recalled, strictly scanned, and justly punished or rewarded.



Whether the words just quoted are, as many affirm, simply an ironical concession to the vanities of life, intended to make the sentiment advanced more pungent, or whether the wise man intended to throw over youth a check which should moderate his enjoyment of life's pleasures, the important truth derived therefrom is unchanged, the antidote to a career of worldly pleasure and dissipation is the *thought of eternity*. Its solemn scenes are set forth as a means of restraining the fire and impetuosity of youth, of correcting the disorder of the passions, and of checking the unhealthy growth of the appetites. Man is reminded that, though he may pass through life, walking in the ways of his heart, deceiving himself, it may be, with hopes of future happiness while yet a slave to lust, he must be

compelled, at last, to look back upon every act and scene of life, and hear the irrevocable decision as to its character and desert. What a check should this thought be to sin, and to every pursuit or pleasure that may possibly interfere with the salvation of the soul! How often would the victim of appetite dash the bowl from his lips, could he but hear the words of wisdom, "For all this God shall bring thee into judgment!" How often would the youth turn away from the haunts of dissipation, and folly, and vice, from the scenes of the revel and the resorts of the abandoned, did he hear the echo of these words upon his heart and conscience! It is wise to look at all the actions of life in this light, to take the instructions of revelation, and with them anticipate that

solemn day when the Judge of quick and dead shall descend from heaven on his great white throne and summon us to his bar. We ought, as rational and immortal beings, thus to weigh every object of life, and to decide in reference to our conduct, as we shall wish we had done when we shall be deep within the secrets of the eternal world.

And while we are permitted to rejoice in all the goodness that a beneficent Providence spreads around our path; while we may indulge in any innocent and healthful recreation that unbends the mind and invigorates the body, and prepares us the better to resume the active and stern duties of life; while we may enjoy every healthful, social pleasure, and give free room for the exercise of all our natural powers, we may find for all this an uner-

ring guide and monitor in the thought of the judgment and eternity. Let the young Christian who is doubtful as to the propriety of certain courses of pleasure, for which he finds neither a warrant nor prohibition in the Scriptures, and whose heart is, it may be, strongly inclining him to tread on uncertain ground, carry himself forward to that solemn event to which all are hastening, when he shall have met the last enemy, and his soul has tried the realities of eternity, and from the hushed repose of the grave, he comes forth with the countless hosts of the dead to look back upon life.

1. Viewed in this light he will find that worldly pleasure is not the great end of existence. God has not placed us here that we may say, "Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die."

He has formed us for high and noble purposes. He has breathed into us his own spiritual and intellectual nature, making us rational and moral beings, and giving to us souls that shall live when the heavens are no more. And he has fitted us to perform a part in the great and eventful scenes of life; not like the moving images of a pageant, but like living and sentient beings, capable of thinking and acting under the power of truth and motives. And he has given us affections and powers of mind, which find their noblest field for exercise in loving and serving Him, whom angels love, and before whom seraphs bow and archangels worship. He has given us natures that can reason and think and love and soar upward in their search for truth, until they approach his throne and draw from

him exhaustless stores of knowledge and light and happiness. He has given us souls that may by his grace rise to glory unseen by mortal eyes, and unconceived by the heart of man, or that if neglected will suffer endless misery and all the pains of the second death. He has given us affections which should fasten upon him as the supreme object of love. He has endowed us with talents for the right improvement of which we are responsible to him, and influence which is to be used for the good of our fellow men and the promotion of the highest interests of our race. Even a consideration then of what we are and may be, and of what we may and ought to accomplish, is enough to indicate the propriety of the great rule which assures us, that man's chief end is not to seek after worldly pleasure,

but to "glorify God and enjoy him for ever." And when we come to stand and look back on life from the light of the eternal world, shall we not acknowledge that worldly pleasure and selfish gratification was a most unworthy part of existence, and that he who lived for it alone, or who allowed it to interfere with the high and holy duties of life, fell far short of the station for which God designed him when he made him a living soul ?

What if he were permitted to enjoy every sensual delight and all the joys that earth can afford, would it have met the aspirations of the immortal soul and fulfilled its glorious destiny ? Who would not prefer the noble career of Paul, in all his self-forgetfulness and self-sacrifice, as he walked with God and glorified him, to that of the rich



man clothed in purple, and faring sumptuously every day, even could he at last have been saved as by fire? The one living for eternity, and the other for time—the one finding his pleasure in the service of God, and the other in the service of appetite and of self—the one preparing himself for high and glorious communion with his Maker and with the spirits of the just made perfect, the other surrounding himself with objects which at the best could afford but a short-lived gratification, and which made heavenly things and eternal realities, distasteful and unwelcome to his thoughts.

Oh! how little does he fulfil the great end of life, who goes with the multitude, saying, Who will show us any good? and who in the search and enjoyment of worldly pleasure robs



his soul of spiritual food and of holy enjoyment! With what wonder must the angels look upon such an one, who has tasted that the Lord is gracious, going from the sanctuary and its blessed ordinances, to mingle in the vain and trifling amusements and pleasures of life! How strange must appear to them the conduct of him, who while possessing noble, spiritual powers and faculties that make his nature but a little lower than their own, busies himself with baubles, and carelessly wastes the precious hours of a life, none too long to fulfil its great purposes, in vain and worldly enjoyments which tend to wean the soul from duty, and to unfit it for the scenes and employments of heaven.

2. Viewed in the light of eternity, earthly pleasure offers to it a strange

and appalling contrast. Go even to the sick bed and set before the sufferer the gay recreations of life, and how utterly inappropriate are they to the place! Enter the room where he lies struggling with disease and fearing the approach of death; draw aside the curtains; look upon his face pallid with exhaustion, or flushed with fever; and while anxious friends are softly treading around his couch, and tenderly ministering to his wants, tell him of the gay hours that have been spent by his companions, in the place of worldly mirth and joy—describe to him the signal triumphs of the last new competitor for the applause of the fashionable world—the wonderful power of her voice, the magnificence of her dress, and the appropriateness of her actions—tell him of the

brilliant scenes of the ball-room, or the exciting contests of the card-table, and how utterly devoid of interest is all this in such an hour, and amid such scenes of suffering! Oh! what an utter and appalling contrast does it afford to that darkened chamber—that sad, care-worn countenance, and troubled and beating heart! What an unwelcome intruder is worldly pleasure in such scenes as this! And yet we are all hastening to the same sick and dying hour. And it ill becomes us to permit our hearts to be absorbed in that which will make the thought of death and eternity unwelcome to us, or which shall unfit us to meet the solemn issue of life, and to enter upon the realities of the future world. It should be then a serious question, with him who is about to en-

ter upon any pursuit or pleasure in regard to which his conscience is not fully enlightened, Will it fit me for a dying hour? will its memory be a source of happiness to me in that solemn occasion when my soul shall stand in the dawning light of the eternal world?

Such thoughts, while they will not hinder the Christian from the enjoyment of any rational pleasure, will temper his relish for earthly things, and will assist him greatly, when tempted by the world to turn aside after its follies and vanities. It is wise for us to act, as we shall wish we had done when time shall be no more, and when we shall have entered upon that state of existence, for which this life is only preparatory, of which this world is but the portal.

## CHAPTER IV.

### THE DANGERS OF WORLDLY PLEASURE.

“She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth.” “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” “I have somewhat against thee, because thou hast left thy first love.”

NOTHING seems more improbable to the young Christian, whose heart is glowing with the fervour of its first love, than that he should ever lose the ardour of those new born affections, or return to the world to seek for pleasure there. Hence the cautions which come from those who are older and more experienced in the divine life, respecting the dangers which will beset them from the world, seem misplaced and inap-

propriate, and are looked upon as arguing a want of confidence in the sincerity of their professions. Yet here in the end proves to be one of their chief dangers, and a most serious hindrance to their growth in grace.

When the newly awakened and converted sinner first enters upon the Christian course, he appears for a while exempted from those fierce temptations under the power of which he has long lived in sin and neglect of the interests of the soul.

He seems to live in a new world, and to breathe the very air of heaven. All the services of religion are delightful, and take the place for the time of the pleasures and pursuits of the world in which he hitherto has found his highest joy. He would, if it were possible, like the disciples on the Mount of

Transfiguration, build a tabernacle that he might for ever dwell in the midst of such holy scenes.

But duty summons him forth to the stern realities of life, and he finds himself in the midst of a world that is no

“ friend to grace  
To help him on to God.”

Society lays its claims upon him which he cannot forego. He must meet his former companions, with whom he has long trod the paths of sin and folly. And here his temptations and his dangers begin. His graces are not to be developed in solitude and monkish cloisters; their strength is to be tried by a contact with the world in all its varied aspects, and by severe tests, to which that world will subject his faith and his professions.

The assaults which are made upon



him are usually of an indirect character, so arranged as not to startle his conscience, except it be exceedingly wakeful and tender; and designed to lead him astray by a gradual and almost imperceptible process. He enters a circle of friends, perhaps for an evening visit. There is music with all its fascinations, and to which no one can object as a pleasant recreation. And then a simple dance is suggested, and he is urged to join in it. Perhaps without him the recreation cannot be enjoyed. His conscience leads him to hesitate and decline. But he is urged by all the arguments which the world knows so well how to use, "What harm is there in it?" "Others dance who are Christians, and why should he object?" "There are not enough to complete the set unless he join them."



He thinks of his solemn vows not to be conformed to this world. Yet he dislikes to offend, or to appear over-rigid and formal in his social intercourse, and so at length yields. When next he meets these friends, they have a new argument to use with him. "He has conformed to their wishes once, and there is no harm in doing so again." Were this to stop here, were no new snares to be thrown around him, it may seem an over-strained morality to object to what has the semblance of a harmless, and innocent, and healthful recreation.

But the sphere of his social pleasures gradually enlarges. If there is no sin in dancing with a circle of eight or ten, there is none in the large and fashionable entertainment to which he is invited, and where the chief pleasure of the

evening is the dance with all its natural accompaniments, and with its terrible and demoralizing influences. When his conscience has thus become accustomed to the violation of principles which he had at first laid down as the law of his Christian life, it is not difficult for the world to introduce him to new pleasures, whose whole tendency is to break down the barriers which a tender and enlightened conscience would rear between the soul and danger.

He has, perhaps, an exquisite taste for music, which he has been accustomed to gratify in the social circle, and in the concert room. But he is told how much more perfect and finished are the songs he hears and admires, when heard amid all the brilliant scenes of the opera. It may be, there is a struggle with his con-

science when this new temptation presents itself before him. Yet he determines to go once, and satisfy himself as to the results of that pleasure upon the mind and heart. The advent of some celebrated artist, whose praises are on the lips of the gay lovers of pleasure, furnishes a fitting occasion for the trial. Bewildered with the scene of enchantment which is spread out before him, charmed with the rich music that fills and entrances his soul, he retires from the spot unconscious that he has received any spiritual injury, and wondering, "why there can be objections against an amusement so ennobling and refining." Nor, though he feels at length free to indulge his tastes in this direction when he pleases, does he see any discrepancy between his practice and his professions.

It is no great step now for him to visit the theatre, whose amusements differ but little from those with which he has become familiar. Nor does his conscience, deadened as it has become by worldly pleasure, perceive the taint which his soul is receiving from the immodest positions, the loose and immoral sentiments, the low and obscene allusions, which too often are there permitted to pander to the lowest and basest passions of the frequenters of these scenes of worldly amusements. The high and ennobling sentiments, which he may have heard in the representations of the tragedy or the drama, are all effaced in the vulgar dances and afterpieces which follow. And insensibly his mind is receiving an injury from which it can only recover by a

long, and bitter, and painful experience of sorrow and repentance.

I have indicated in this description only one of the many forms in which the temptations of the world approach the young Christian, as an example of the dangers to which he is exposed by the slightest conformity to the world in its maxims and tastes. Let us now look at such an one thus led astray, and see what are the evils which his spiritual nature has experienced in thus yielding to the temptations which have been set before him, and what may be the probable result if he continue thus to go with the world in its pursuit of pleasure and amusement.

1. One of the first and most natural consequences of the course he has followed is the injury which has been inflicted upon his conscience. It has

lost much of that tenderness and power which it possessed, when it first felt the renewing and quickening influences of the Spirit. Listening as he then did to its faintest whispers, and subjecting himself wholly to its guidance, it was a sure and safe guide which almost instinctively warned him of danger. And here in obeying its instructions was his only safety. But when, under the influence of temptation, he ventured upon ground which, though not plainly forbidden in God's word, was yet of doubtful propriety; when meeting the warnings of conscience with the question, "What harm is there in it?" and so turning aside from its directions, he began a process of self-hardening which has been increasing until the inward monitor, if it be not wholly inactive, is yet confused in

its interpretations of duty, and often is silent even amid plain and open infractions of the divine law. It is needless to argue respecting the danger of such a condition. When the light within is darkness, how great is that darkness! He who has lost that tenderness of conscience on which we are dependent for all timely warnings against the assaults of sin, is like an army in the presence of an enemy at the dead of night, with its sentinels asleep, and so exposed momentarily to be surprised, and defeated, and destroyed.

2. A second result of the course he is pursuing is the loss of all spiritual enjoyment.

Lightly as the world may esteem religion as to its influence on our present happiness, it is a truth to which



he who lives nearest to God can testify,  
that

“Religion never was designed  
To make our pleasures less.”

It has sources of joy which are infinitely above all those that this world possesses. But they are open only to those who have left the broken cisterns of earthly happiness, and have gone to the living fountains that well forth from the throne of God. They only, who forsake all for Christ, shall receive manifold more in this present life, as well as everlasting life in the world to come. But he who, mistrusting the power of religion to find him happiness every where, and under all circumstances, goes to the world for amusement and pleasure, and is led by it into its dangerous and dissipating scenes, loses all relish for true spiritual



enjoyment. As his interest in the world increases, his satisfaction in heavenly things diminishes. The living and growing Christian draws his sweetest pleasure from communion with God and his people. In the fervour of his first love he desires no other happiness than this.

And if by watchfulness and prayer he is able, in the strength of divine grace, to resist the allurements of the world, need he ever descend from those holy and elevated affections, to seek for joy amid the scenes of earthly and sinful pleasures? The closet, with its blessed hours of communion with God; of meditation in his word and of prayer for the blessings which the soul needs; and the sanctuary with its varied means of grace, its cheerful services, its hallowed fellowship, are to the Christian a

very foretaste of heaven. But to be enjoyed, the soul must have full sympathy with Christ, so that it can say, "Whom have I in heaven but thee? and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides thee." But when a Christian has been drawn aside from his profession and his duties, when he has trodden upon doubtful and forbidden ground, and become insensible to the claims of duty, and to the solemn obligations under which he rests as a member of the church of Christ, he loses insensibly his relish for heavenly things, and so finds at length that all spiritual enjoyment has left him. His closet is no longer a Bethel. If visited now, it is a spot barren, and cold, and devoid of interest.

The place of prayer is like a desert, and even the sanctuary is resorted to

with none of the exultant joy that caused the Psalmist to exclaim, "How amiable are thy tabernacles, O Lord of hosts!" "I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord."

Thus deprived of all fellowship with God and his people, where can he find comfort in religion, or joy in its ordinances? He has but a name to live, conscience sometimes awakens and alarms him, for it cannot always sleep, nor can its power always be paralyzed. And then he seems for a time to come to himself, and endeavours to recover the position he has lost; but failing to go and cast himself wholly upon Christ, and presuming that before he can obtain peace, he must first perform a certain round of duty, he makes a feeble attempt at reformation, which is

followed by a relapse into sin and folly, and a return to the pleasures of the world. Returning to his closet, he begins to feel the stings of an awakening conscience, he looks back on broken vows and a dishonoured profession, and though for the time he resolves to lead a new life, the first blast of temptation again carries him into fresh acts of forgetfulness of God, and conformity to the world. Thus sinning and repenting, and repenting and sinning, he is a stranger to all true peace of mind and heart, and to the joys that are found in the communion and service of God, and in the fellowship of his people.

3. Another result of this conformity to the world is, that it renders him useless as a member of the church of Christ. The object for which he is placed there is to honour God, and

advance the interests of his kingdom. "Herein," saith Christ, "is my father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."

But he who allows himself to be drawn aside from his profession, and to become conformed to the world in its sinful tastes and amusements, loses not only the confidence of his brethren but the respect of the world. His influence, as a Christian, ceases when he has crossed the line that divides the church and the world. Even the enemies of our holy religion respect and honour the man who leads a life consistent with his Christian profession, and look upon their lives as a strange and more convincing argument in favour of the truth of Christianity than all the demonstrations of the defenders of the gospel. The logic of the life

often succeeds where other testimony fails.

But he who in effect tells the world that religion has no pleasures, and who, when he desires them, seeks for them amid scenes of gayety, and amusement, and dissipation, of what use is he as a witness for Christ? What new lesson does he give of the value and power of religion? What proof does he afford that "Wisdom's ways are pleasantness and all her paths are peace?"

So far from being a witness for Christ, he is leading men to question the reality of the religion he professes, and to despise the gospel whose effects he fearfully misrepresents.

His example so far as it extends, is an injury to the cause he professes, whenever he passes over to the world and is led astray by its wiles.

He cannot stand neutral. If he is doing no good, he is accomplishing evil. If the fig tree is barren, it is a cumberer of the ground. The cause of religion suffers, whenever its professors fail to manifest its proper results. And Christ, were he questioned, "What are these wounds in thy hands?" might answer, "Those with which I was wounded in the house of my friends."

4. Such a state as I have described is one of imminent danger, because it may prepare the way for more fearful acts of sin, and a state of apostasy. Many a pleasure, in itself harmless, may lead to actual transgression, and thus become a snare to the soul. Many a fair and flourishing professor has gone back to the world by parleying with temptation.

Our own age and times have pro-



duced more than one appalling example of men, who once stood high in the church, but who, yielding to the fascinations of pleasure, that the world called innocent, were drawn down to ruin. No true Christian will indeed ever be lost, God's grace will keep him. Yet he who, resting on this assurance, encourages himself to sin, in the hope of being restored to the favour of God, is giving fearful evidence that he has neither part nor lot in the matter, and may be left to an entire and fatal departure from virtue, and so be placed wholly beyond the reach of mercy.

“If,” says Andrew Fuller, “we are contented with a relapsed state of mind, what grounds can we have to conclude that it is not our element? If the waters continue to be naught,

it is a sign that the spring has not been healed. There is no reason to think that Judas himself laid his accounts with such an issue as things came to. During the ministry of our Lord, while he kept the bag, and sometimes made free with its contents, it is probable he nevertheless reckoned himself a good man.

“He saw many failings in his fellow-disciples and in all other good men, and he might think this to be his. When he had covenanted with the chief priests, it does not appear that he expected his Master would be eventually taken and crucified. When they were about to lay hands on him, he had often passed through the midst of them, and went his way; and he might suppose that it would be so again. When therefore he saw that

he was condemned, he was thrown into a state of terrible amazement, and in the issue went and hanged himself. Such was the process of an apostate, and such his end. Surely it warns us to take heed how we trifle with these things, the end whereof is death."

If the heart of any young Christian recoils from the thought of the character and end of this apostate, let him avoid the first steps that lead to it. Let him heed the admonition of those who have learned by bitter experience the dangers of worldly pleasure, and seeking grace from on high ponder the paths of his feet, that all his ways may be established. Let him think that earthly and sensual enjoyment is too dearly purchased, when it deadens the conscience, making it less sensitive

to the approach of evil; when it deprives the soul of the enjoyment of communion with God and his people, and when it places him in jeopardy from future sins and from open and fatal apostasy.

## CHAPTER V.

## SIGNS OF DECAY IN THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

“Examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith.”  
“Wo unto them that are at ease in Zion.” “I  
have not found thy works perfect before God.”

THE experience which has been described in the preceding chapter, often is attained by degrees so imperceptible as to leave the professing Christian unconscious of the full extent of his departure from God. Failing to examine himself frequently as to his true position and the nature of the hopes within him, he passes on in a round of formal and heartless observances, and it is only occasionally that, under the pressure of some solemn warning, he is

aware of what is going on within him, and of the terrible influences of the world upon his spiritual affections. The history which Bunyan has given (in his wondrous allegory) of the turning aside of the Pilgrims into By-Path Meadow, and so into the grounds of Giant Despair, is a graphic illustration of the experience of those, who finding the way rough, seek some easier and more alluring path, which seems to run by the side of that which tends heavenward, but which insensibly leads them far astray.

Satan does not, at once, present to the Christian the "great transgression," but tempts him with "presumptuous sins," and so, step by step, leads his soul astray. Did the pilgrim but look up at his way-marks, he might pause and retrace his steps, before he

wholly backslides. It may be well then to pause and consider what are some of the tokens of decay in spiritual affections, which should warn the Christian that the path he is pursuing is one of danger. As there are signs of life and soul prosperity which cannot well be mistaken, though they may be counterfeited, as far as their outward manifestation is concerned, so also there are signs of decay which indisputably point the soul forward to sorrow, and uselessness, and guilt, and despair. And he who heeds them not will soon find himself in darkness and gloom, if he be a child of God, that will be to his soul like the horror of the valley of the shadow of death, and in which he must walk until his faith once more beholds in Christ his mighty Redeemer, and he returns to



the great Shepherd and Bishop of his soul. Among these signs we notice,

I. Indifference towards the assemblies of God's people. As with the growing Christian his chief delight is with the saints, especially those whose religion is clear and unmistakable, so with the decaying Christian, the reverse of this is but too apparent. His attendance upon the ordinances of God's house is a matter which is left wholly to feeling, and not to the firm and conscientious conviction of duty. Slight causes now keep him away from the house of God, and from the place of prayer, and even from the *table of the Lord*. The ministrations of his own pastor do not please him, though he knows them to be the solemn and sincere utterances of the truth of God. He quarrels with the matter

or the manner, and often absents himself from his own sanctuary that he may hear and see some strange things, being far more anxious for novelty and excitement, than to be "fed with the sincere milk of the word that he may grow thereby."

If he comes to the house of God, it is more from fear of the censures of the church, than from the thought that the eye of Christ is upon him; and he is so little prepared for the solemn assemblies of God's people, that the hour of meeting them finds him in the midst of the world and its pleasures, from which he goes to the sanctuary with an utter want of reverence for its services, and wholly unfitted to profit thereby.

II. A second sign of decay is the loss of interest in the duties of the

closet. This indeed is the source of the evil, yet it also becomes a landmark which shows his downward progress. As the world creeps in, the spirit of devotion retires. He finds the time that he devotes to the work of prayer and meditation on God's truth sensibly diminishing. Reading the Scriptures becomes a burthen, wandering thoughts in time of prayer are entertained, and the world comes in a welcome guest even to his closet, and stands between his soul and God.

His utterances of devotion are formal and lifeless. He looks over, but does not, as once, study—drink in the precious truths of the Bible. He prefers the novel, the magazine, the newspaper—any thing that speaks of the world and its pleasures—to that blessed gospel, whose instructions make

man wise unto eternal life. To him it is a sealed book. Its fountains are dried, its pages are but a barren desert. He hurries over a chapter and closes the volume, and repeats a form of words which he calls prayer, and passes away to the world to find his delight and pleasure there.

III. A third sign of decay is found in his growing disinclination to self-denial. Care for the body takes the place of care for the soul. Duties that require the taking up of the cross are neglected. Ease and pleasure are preferred to the yoke of Christ. Works of Christian charity and mercy are abandoned, because they interfere with other engagements, or require some exertion and toil. And even the name of Christ and the honour and glory of his truth are betrayed by

silence, when sinners seek to throw discredit upon them, rather than take up the cross and endure the suffering and disparagement which may come to those who seek to defend the religion of Jesus.

IV. The decaying Christian finds fearful tokens of his downward progress in the little anxiety and distress he has when conscious that he has committed sin. Aggravated acts of transgression now appear small to him, and he thinks upon them with indifference, while the thought of his bosom lust and his besetting sin is far more prevalent with him than any wish to please and serve God.

So long as his miscarriages are kept from the eye of the church, he is little troubled concerning them. His chief care is to maintain a decent appearance

among men, to have the form of godliness and the words of Christ's disciples, while he has no special anxiety that his thoughts, and motives, and affections should be right in the sight of God. Slight offences make him impatient, and under their influence he often commits great sin. Slight temptations are yielded to without a struggle, nay he places himself often within the reach of evil with little thought of what are to be the results upon his soul.

V. The decaying Christian is unwilling to listen to kind and faithful admonition. They who deal truly with him, and seek to warn him of his danger and guilt, are regarded as his enemies. He shuns their society; he dislikes their conversation; he resents their counsels as impertinent and un-

desirable. And as the very walk and example of those who live near to God is a constant rebuke to his coldness and worldliness, he shuns their society and prefers that of the enemies of Christ and his people. His experience is the reverse of that which the Psalmist possessed when he said, "Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness; and let him reprove me, it shall be an excellent oil which shall not break my head."

VI. The decaying Christian finds himself less and less susceptible to the motives of the gospel. A watchful care over himself and conduct, and a godly walk and conversation are rather the result of accident than of settled habit, drawn out in view of the great truths and doctrines of the word of God. The thought of a Saviour suf-



fering and dying for sin, the love of Christ, the inhabitation of the Spirit, the holiness and majesty of the great God, the interests of the church—these, and all the other motives to holiness which are set forth in the word of life, cease to restrain him from acts which tend to bring reproach upon that name which he has professed. The heart has become cold and dead to those truths and principles which once exercised a controlling influence over his conversation and life.

VII. The decaying Christian becomes more and more averse to any proper self-inspection. He is unwilling to look into his own heart. He loves not to apply to himself the searching truths of the gospel. He is so ignorant of his true spiritual standing as to know not whether he is ad-

vancing or retrograding, whether he is growing or declining in grace. His closet exercises, if continued, are never improved as occasions of turning his thoughts within, and examining himself in the light which the word of God might shed upon him, and he is wholly a stranger to all proper and practical meditations upon the truths that, if self-applied, would convince him of sin and show him the evil that is within him.

VIII. Lastly the decaying Christian finds his whole experience a sad and painful reverse of that which marks the living and growing child of God.

Prayer is a burthen; duty is unwelcome; calamity in the house of God awakens no sorrow in his heart; the most solemn worship quickly wearies him; he is satisfied with him-

self, small occasions keep him away from the sanctuary, the Bible ceases to be loved and valued as a precious treasure, the work of the Holy Spirit in his sanctification is undervalued and unsought. Bosom lusts are nursed and cherished; open sins are often committed without pain, and reflected upon with indifference; novelties are preferred to sound doctrine; the company of the world is sought after, and that of the people of God is shunned. Pleasure is preferred to self-denial, even though it leads the soul astray. The affections are withdrawn from Christ, and all sensible evidence of his love and grace has departed.

He has a name to live, but is dead. He moves amidst the church, but his heart is dead to its holy joys, his interest in its ordinances has declined, his

love for its members has grown cold, his zeal for its prosperity has decayed; he stands in the garden of the Lord, but there is no fruit brought forth to perfection.

He professes to know God, but in works he denies him. His interests, his tastes, his affections, are with the world and its wealth, its pursuits and honours and pleasures. He has upon him the evident tokens of one who has departed wholly from the right way, and who, unless restored by grace to the path of holiness, will be left to mourn at the last, "How have I hated instruction and despised reproof!"

## CHAPTER VI.

### DIRECTIONS TO THE BACKSLIDER.

“ O Israel, return unto the Lord thy God, for thou hast fallen by thy iniquity.” “ Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent and do thy first works.” “ Return ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings.”

It would be strange indeed if none into whose hands this book may fall could feel that the subject of this chapter is adapted to their case. It is a sad truth that among those who profess godliness there are many who, under the influence already alluded to, have permitted their spiritual affections to become cold, and their zeal to decline, until they have lost all evidence

of being children of God ; while others, who have a name to live, are conscious of heart wanderings and of secret backslidings, which if not checked may lead to open and fearful apostasy. Were one to pass through the church and address to every member a question, How stands the matter between your soul and God ? The answers he would receive, if they were the honest expressions of the heart, would astonish even those who knew them most intimately. Many come to the altar of God whose hearts know none of that exceeding joy and peace, which is said to be the result of faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There was a time when such found joy and peace in believing. You entered upon the Christian life with the full determination to consecrate your-

self wholly to Christ. And for a while you ran well. Your closet was a favoured resort, and the tabernacles of God were amiable. And when you stood up before many witnesses, and professed unalterable attachment to Christ and his cause, and vowed to walk in all the ordinances of his house blameless, you did nothing more than obey the promptings of your heart, moved by a sense of love to the Saviour, and an earnest desire to obey all his commands. In these blessed days of your first love, how tender was the conscience! how sensitively it shrank from the first approaches of sin! how you avoided any act which might bring dishonour upon that sacred name you had professed! how carefully you abstained from the very appearance of evil! refusing to engage



in any pursuit or pleasure that might be looked upon as inconsistent with the promises you had made. The salvation of your soul was to you the one thing needful, whose pursuit you were disposed henceforth to make the great business of life. You loved God, and wished to be wholly his; you loved his church and its ordinances; you loved his people, and found delight in communion with them.

Yet there became evident at length to yourself and others painful symptoms of a decay in your spiritual affections and experience. You know too well how it commenced, and you can trace it to its sad results. Your brethren and the world first became aware of it, in the diminished interest you manifested in religious subjects, and in the performance of religious

duties. But you know that the evil began in the wanderings of the heart from God. Your closet witnessed that declension first. Your Bible was less frequently and seriously studied, and your faith lost its lustre and power. Then you became restless and dissatisfied. The ordinances of the sanctuary lost their interest. You thought the fault was in others, and you laid it at their doors. Your brethren seemed to be changed. Your pastor seemed to have grown dull and lifeless. The church appeared barren and cold, and you went away in search of novelties and excitement, little dreaming that the fault was with yourself, and that your own heart was the seat of the difficulty. Then you began to yield your former convictions of duty to the claims of the world. You took an un-

wonted interest in its pleasures and social enjoyments. You looked to the pomp and vanities you had once renounced, and to the amusements which you once thought unworthy a Christian's notice ; and asking yourself what harm there could possibly be in all this, and justifying yourself by the practice of some whom you knew to be professors of the religion of Jesus, you entered the world with all your heart and gave yourself up to all its fascinations. Sometimes when conscience rebuked you, you made a feeble effort at resistance, and sought to lead a life that should honour your profession. But mistaking the only way of return, you found yourself still wandering in a devious path, from whose mazes you had no power to extricate yourself.

Then you parleyed with temptation ;

you listened to the solicitations of your own heart, and so turned aside to sin. Perhaps some former appetite or lust, which you had long thought dead, revived and returned to you with fresh power, and made you again its captive. You permitted your thoughts to dwell on some forbidden act, until it lost its hatefulness, and you were again bound in its fetters. You became entangled in your own corruption, and fell into the snare of your own sinful affection. One sin prepared the way for another, and weakened the power of resistance, until now you can commit sin without fear, and think upon it with indifference. Where this will end you know not.

You have no peace of mind ; you dare not give up all hopes of heaven ; you are unwilling to give up the world.

You are in trouble and perplexity; your heart is not at rest. You come to the table of the Lord, but hear a voice saying, "What doest thou here?" You know that your course is noticed by others, and is an occasion of offence. You know that the church feels your defection, and mourns over it. You know that God looks upon your conduct, and hides his face from you.

You have lost his smile. Guilt oppresses you; shame weighs down your spirit; fears alarm you. You dread the censures of the church; the flame of holy love is quenched; hope has fled from the heart, and all your Christian graces are enervated and paralyzed. Against these fearful inroads of sin you have made repeated but ineffectual efforts at resistance.

You have resolved to be more atten-

tive to the duties of the sanctuary ; to visit the place of prayer, and to be less occupied with the world. You have thought thus to recover your former spiritual standing. Yet, alas ! how soon did you prove your impotence, as you again yielded to the claims of ease and self and the world, and so lapsed into coldness and indifference !

You have resolved to resist temptation ; but your struggles with your master sin have been like those of the poor insect entangled in the spider's web. A slight lull in the breath of the tempest has led you to hope that the storm had passed ; and you have ventured forth only to see all your fair resolutions swept away. Your bosom lusts, and your darling passions and appetites, have retained their fear-

ful influence over you ; and you have gone forth even from your closet, to yield to the tempter, and to give yourself up an easy and a willing prey to his cruel devices.

Resting under false impressions of the nature and end of self-examination, you try to look into your own heart, and to enquire what are your hopes for eternity. But all is darkness, and you turn away from the sight in fear and pain. You feel that you are unprepared to meet God in judgment ; that you have no enjoyment of religion, no satisfaction in your present condition ; that you are useless members of the church of Christ, exerting no proper influence for good over the hearts and lives of others ; and that you have no power to resist the temptation that brings on



you fresh remorse, and may perhaps plunge you in disgrace and ruin. Your condition is dark and gloomy, but it is not hopeless. Your heavenly Father addresses to you the same gracious invitation that he extended to his ancient people : "Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings." His heart goes out after you with all the yearnings of a father.

The good shepherd, who missed from his fold but one sheep, seemed for the time to forget those which went not astray, in his anxiety for the poor wanderer. The whole love of the father seems to centre in his poor prodigal, in a far country, hungry and faint, and in beggary and want. So God looks upon his people who wander from him. His eye is upon them ;

his love follows them ; his tender pity goes out after them ; his kind invitations are sent forth to bring them back from their wanderings.

O thou who sittest in deep dejection, fearing lest God has wholly forgotten to be gracious, who art conscious of a neglect of duty, and of a violation of covenant vows and obligations, listen to the call which a kind and gracious God sends after thee. He utters no reproach, he makes no threatening, though thou hast wandered from him and cast off his fear, and exposed thyself to his wrath. He calls thee his child. He may reprove and discipline and chasten thee, but he yet indicates toward thee all the love of a father and a God.

But let us notice the method by which the wanderer is to be restored.

God's command is one that calls us back to himself. No true peace will ever be enjoyed by him who has strayed from duty, until he finds his way back to Christ.

Yet it is unhappily true, that as the unconverted sinner seeks in many ways to find ease from the pangs of an awakened conscience, so the fallen Christian often endeavours to regain his former position by means that only indicate a fearful ignorance of the great doctrines of the gospel, which assure us that we can be justified only by faith in the sacrifice and merits of the Lord Jesus Christ, and not by any work or obedience of our own.

Often when the professing Christian finds himself in a state of declension and coldness, when he is conscious that he is living in the neglect of duty, in

conformity to the world, he resolves that he will commence a new life, and break off from his sinful habits, and repent and do his first works: By this means he hopes to find relief from the pangs of an awakened conscience. Yet when he has tried to fulfil his resolutions, he finds, as he looks back in his experience, that he is no better than when he first began his reformation. Or perhaps under the alarm which he has felt at the thought of some glaring defection, he has desisted from the practice of what he knows to be wrong, and begins to derive some comfort from the fact, and to hope that his spiritual state is improving. Yet he has only lost the vivid impressions of his transgressions, and is still liable at the next assault of the tempter to fall back into open or secret sin. Such is

not the gospel method of restoring the soul out of the depths into which it has fallen.

The branch which has become fruitless will not be recovered by nostrums and treatment administered to its withering leaves. The vine-dresser, who seeks to restore it to vitality, does not prune and trim it; but, finding that it is almost broken from its parent stock, he seeks to reunite it thereto, and so bind it fast, that it may once more receive from the root nourishment and strength.

So he who finds himself 'fruitless and lifeless, will never recover spiritual vitality by simple efforts to break off from sin and to perform duty. Yet here is where many stumble, and make a mistake that is fatal to their peace of mind and growth in grace. The

very first act of the backslider, ere he attempts to do any outward duty, or to improve his character and Christian experience, is to cast himself wholly on the Lord Jesus Christ, as though he had never before exercised faith in him. He must come in the attitude of a poor, guilty, and hell-deserving sinner, having no work to entitle him to the divine favour, and make a fresh application to the blood of Christ, by which alone the guilt of sin can be washed away; and to the merits and obedience of Christ, by which alone he can be justified in the sight of God. This is the direction that comes to him from the sacred oracles, "Return unto me." Yet many a Christian spends years in darkness, and a most unhappy religious experience of doubts and sins and repentings, because he

fails to seek for rest in the same way in which he first found peace in believing. The act of faith, by which he first ventured on Christ, needs to be renewed daily. It must be renewed with every consciousness of sin. His return must be to God, not to his own works. Nor must he pause to make himself better, nor wait until the sense of sin has lost its vividness, nor linger until he has paid a sort of penance by his own unhappiness and sorrow ; but come at once, with all his sins before him, acknowledging his transgressions, confessing his guilt, and depending for mercy, and looking for hope, only through the merits and death of Christ.

None but Christ can heal the hurt of the daughter of his people. The only safe course is to go to him, as



though we had never gone before, washing afresh in the fountain he has opened for sin and uncleanness. There David went and cried, "Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow." It was only by the cross of Christ that he sought relief from the pangs of a troubled conscience; and it is only here that any soul can be healed. It is only thus that we can begin again to walk in the Spirit. Sin is most successfully opposed, not by direct assaults upon it, but by the introduction of holy principles. A man that is a profane swearer or a drunkard, may, in his self-righteousness, cease from these sins, and yet be guilty of some others equally offensive to God. But when he has gone to Christ and has tasted of his love;

when he has stood by his cross and felt his pardoning grace; when he has washed in his blood and known its cleansing power; the strength of sin dies within him, and he begins to lead a new life, whose springs are found in Christ and in him alone.

So the Christian who has lost the fervour of his first love, and has fallen into sinful departures from God, may dry up one evil stream, but another will burst forth afresh, full of bitterness and sorrow. He may lop off one branch that is fruitless, but another will soon die, or its fruit become unwholesome, and its leaves wither. And so will it continue, until he returns to God, not only by repentance, but with a simple faith in the sacrifice and righteousness of his Son. Here is the secret of a restoration to the di-

vine favour and to holy living. Here is the only source of true peace of mind and heart. The man who attempts to work out a religious experience of joy and assurance, and a consistent and godly life, by a round of duties, and by abstinence from sins, without any reference to Christ as both the author and finisher of his faith, will miserably fail. He will have only a series of defeats and doubts, of repentings and sins. He who would be safe must have his life hid with Christ in God.

The sum of all genuine Christian experience is contained in these words : "looking unto Jesus." In that sight there is not only the life of the soul, but the death of sin ; and no one will wander far astray who walks simply by faith. While he who is conscious

of fearful departures from the way of peace, who has fallen into temptation and sin, will be restored to hope and joy only when he once more catches a sight of the cross. To that let him return. There let him stand and wash in the sacred flood that wells forth from his side who hangs thereon and then shall he once more have occasion to sing of redeeming love and mercy. Hell and sin may resist his course, but Christ will give him strength. He may be called to war against principalities and powers, but his great Captain will lead him on to victory :

“ And slay his sins and end the strife.’

## CHAPTER VII.

### HAPPINESS ONLY IN GOD.

“Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased.”  
“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom.” “My yoke is easy and my burden is light.”

THE object for which these cautions have here been uttered against a conformity to the world in its customs and pleasures, will have been wholly misapprehended if it be supposed that my design is to rob the young Christian of one real pleasure, or call him to a life of moroseness and gloom, or take from him one smile of true joy.

There is a world of ripe and blessed Christian experience in the answer

given in the Shorter Catechism to the question, "What is the chief end of man?" viz: "To glorify God and enjoy him for ever." It connects happiness here and hereafter with his service; and its truth is abundantly sustained in the history of the church in every age. The Psalmist, from a full experience of the Christian life, left as his testimony, even amid many sorrows, "There be many that say, Who will shew us any good? Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased." Never does the carnal heart judge more unjustly of God, than when it regards his service as a burthen, and calls him a hard master. Never does man more surely seek hap-

piness where alone it is to be found, than when he consecrates himself with all his impulses and affections to God, rendering prompt and cheerful allegiance to his government, conforming to his law, and leaving all to follow Christ.

Let us question the people of God in every age, and see if they have not had most of true and lasting happiness even in the present life, who have enjoyed most of communion with God, and have voluntarily and cheerfully surrendered the world with its pleasures and customs, that they might find them all in Christ. The man, who, of all the ancient church, stands forth in a light and glory almost superhuman, and who, in his near approaches to God, became so glorious in the reflection of his light, as that the people could not



look upon him, refused the honours of the court of Egypt, and turned away from its splendour, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season. Who shall say now that he did not act wisely? Who can doubt that, amid all the outward sorrows he was called to endure, he had a spring of holy joy and pleasure within, which flowed on through all the desert with its sweet and unfailing refreshment? Look too at David, who was bearing daily testimony to the happiness that is found in God; and who, when the world was laying its riches and honours at his feet, could stand in the very heyday of life, and say to his God and Saviour, "Whom have I in heaven but thee; and there is none upon the earth that I desire besides

thee." And when we come to a later age, and ask of the holy Paul where the highest joy and happiness is found, his answer is clear and distinct: "For me to live is Christ." From the hour that it pleased God to call him into his kingdom, he conferred not with flesh and blood. He laid aside every weight. He allowed nothing to encumber him in his earnest efforts to honour God. The world lured him in vain. He had tasted its pleasures and found them unsatisfying. He had tried the service of Christ, and knew that it fully met the longings and the wants of his soul. Nor were occasions wanting in which the ability of Christ to sustain and comfort him was tested, but it never failed. Scourged and bruised, and with his feet fast in the stocks, he could sing praises at midnight.

Persecuted and cast down, he was not forsaken. Nothing could check the ardour with which he sought to honour God ; nothing could equal the full and ceaseless comforts that flowed in upon his soul from the love and grace of Christ. He counted all things but dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus, his Saviour. Look at his life and experience, and see if he did not possess in perfection the secret of true happiness.

Nor is his experience singular in this respect. Never has God been to any of his people " a wilderness and a land of darkness." He has made ample provision for securing their happiness even here. Were it the fact, as many seem to believe, that religion calls us to follow a cold and gloomy pathway ; and that when it bids us

renounce the world, and be no longer conformed thereto, it draws us away from all that is lovely and beautiful in life, there would still be no doubt that its offers were worthy our prompt and hearty acceptance. Admit that God calls on us to win heaven by a series of self-inflicted tortures and mortifications, that would turn this beautiful world into all the gloom and horror of a hermit's cave, or the cloister of a monk, is not the prize worthy the self-denial? Yet we are called to no such penances. "The yoke of Christ is easy, and his burthen is light." "Wisdom's ways are pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." There is not one of the requirements of the gospel which is not fitted, if fully and cheerfully obeyed, to elevate and dignify and ennoble man's nature, and to make

him, even in this life, happier than it is possible for the most earnest votary of worldly pleasure and ambition to become.

I do not say that the meagre and miserable Christianity, too prevalent at the present day, which holds on to the world with all its fashions and follies and vanities, and drinks of its broken cisterns, while it seeks sometimes, under the lashes of a convicted conscience, to hold communion with God; which is unwilling to renounce either the world or the hope of heaven; which sins and repents, and repents and sins again; which goes from the communion table, and from solemn vows of consecration to Christ, to mingle again with the children of pleasure at the dance, the theatre, the opera, or the card table—that such

Christianity is productive of any peace. I wonder not, such men being the example of what religion can do, that some may entertain the suspicion that the service of God is a wilderness and a land of darkness.

But is this a fair illustration of what that service is? This I say, that he who throws himself wholly on the side of Christ; who, when he takes him for a Saviour, takes him for his present and his eternal portion; who fully regards himself as no longer his own, but belonging entirely in all his time, influence, possessions, sympathies, and impulses to Christ, can testify that his yoke is easy, not only; but can challenge the world with all its pleasures, to produce one such thrill of pure and holy joy as he feels in his hours of nearest communion with God, and

of most self-denying consecration to his service.

Ask of all the great cloud of witnesses, who have been washed in the blood of Christ, if this is not so. Go, ask the glorified saints, who endured a great fight of afflictions, and of whom the world was not worthy, whether the service of God was ever a burden ; whether their hours of prayer and holy communion were like the desolate sands on which no rain falls, nor dew distils, and over which no verdure nor sweet flowers spread their beauty. Ask whether their years of earnest labour and toil for the upbuilding of the Redeemer's kingdom, and the salvation of souls, were degrading in their influence, and gloomy and forbidding in their results ; and whether the memory of their hours of consecration to



God, brings even now a shade of sorrow over their spirits.

Oh, how does the answer that swells from every happy saint, repel the unjust accusation and suspicion ! Never in all the history of the past has God wearied his people ; never has he asked them to renounce a single claim of self and ease, which he has not fully made up with sweet and holy joy, that has been to the soul a very antepast of heaven.

Never is Christ to any that truly love and serve him, a root out of a dry ground. Thousands of living witnesses can testify to the happiness which springs from him. Go to the humble Christian who lives near to God, who meditates in his word, who makes the sanctuary his home, who devotes his time to the earnest and faithful duties

of a Christian life, and ask him what testimony he gives for Christ.

Go to that godly father or that pious mother whose forms have always been associated with the Bible and the sanctuary, and ask if they have ever found religion a burthen; and how will every evidence they bear to the preciousness of Christ, and the joy of his service, throw back the unjust suspicion which the world, and too many in the church cherish, as to the happiness that may be derived, even in the present life, from entire devotion to God! The sincere, and humble, and self-denying Christian ought to be, and is, the happiest of the happy. The springs of his pleasure never dry—they well forth from the throne of God, and are exhaustless. And to a service thus abundantly calculated to

elevate the soul, and fill it with sacred pleasure, you are invited ; you have connected yourself with the visible people of God ; you profess to have received the high and holy calling of those whom God has chosen to be his children. If you have not been deceived in your religious experience, you have found peace and joy and blessing. You can look back on the time when

“ first you felt  
The Saviour’s pardoning blood,  
Applied to cleanse your soul from guilt,  
And bring you home to God.”

Can you not testify that then in the fervour and power of your new born hope and love, you found a happiness which far surpassed all that you had ever before experienced amid the sinful pleasures of life? And can you,

when you have tasted that the Lord is gracious, return to that world which you have found only a snare, and which you know would, if possible, lead your soul astray ?

Seek then your happiness only in God. He has never deceived you. His service is a rich reward. He calls no one to a life of sorrow and gloom. "Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart." "No good thing will the Lord withhold from them that walk uprightly." Such are the promises of God's word, and they who cast themselves wholly upon the Lord, and who engage most heartily in his service, will have an experience of rich and abundant blessing, and of pure and exhaustless pleasures which the world can neither give nor take away.

## CHAPTER VIII.

### THE CHRISTIAN'S HIGH CALLING.

“Walk worthy of God who hath called you unto his kingdom and glory.” “But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.” “According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love.” “I have chosen you that ye should go and bring forth fruit.”

FROM the consideration of the dangers which beset the Christian in his contact with the world, and the temptations which too often draw the professed child of God aside from duty and true happiness, I would turn the

thoughts of my young readers to the high and holy duties of life as contrasted with the follies and vanities against which they have been warned. If you are truly children of God, you have been chosen by him in his eternal counsels to a life of holiness as well as to an eternity of happiness. Every thing in your position, in the age in which you live, in the solemn duties to which you are called, in the terms of salvation, and the price paid for your redemption, calls on you to aim at a high standard of piety, and to the attainment of eminent holiness.

If you would have at last an abundant entrance administered unto you into the kingdom of God, you must make religion the business of life. It is not enough to profess it, you must be so permeated with the Spirit

of Christ, that it shall shine forth in every act of life. It is because the love of the world and conformity to it hinder the prayers of the Christian, prevent his usefulness, destroy his influence, and mar his peace of heart, that I have sought to present to you the dangers and evils of seeking after worldly pleasures and amusements, or conforming to worldly customs and tastes. The motto of the Christian should be, "Let us lay aside every weight."

The Gospel admits of no compromise with the world. It requires of us that we give all to Christ; that when we have laid our poor sinful hearts at the foot of his cross, that there they might be washed and renewed, we consecrate their entire affections and impulses to the service of Him who died



that we might live. The sight of that cross should for ever annihilate all thought of self, and all desire for any pleasure which does not spring from the love and grace of Christ. Resolve then, in his strength, that you will forsake all to follow him, and that you will renounce every thing that may interfere with his service. You have a glorious vocation. Look over the sacred oracles and see with what dignity and honour the Christian is invested, linked as he is with the sovereign and eternal purposes of God. Saith the apostle, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praise of Him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light." And that he might indicate the duties which flow from

such a calling, he says again, "As He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, because it is written, Be ye holy for I am holy."

Every where in the sacred record we are meeting with such evidence of the high honours, and the exalted privileges, and the solemn duties of the people of God. They are objects of special interest to the angels. Their introduction to the family of Christ is an occasion that sends a thrill of joy to all those great and glorious spirits that stand in the presence of God. They have been bought at an amazing price, that being no longer their own they might become the willing and faithful servants of Christ in the establishment of his kingdom, in the up-building of the church, in the salva-

tion of souls, and the final conversion of the world to himself. To be fitted for such responsibilities, you must gird up the loins of your mind and put on the whole armour of God. The work before you requires the whole of life, and all the energies of your soul. The world that lures you to its bowers of ease and pleasure, is the enemy of your Master, and must yet be subdued to him. In that conquest you must bear a part; not by parleying with its temptations, not by yielding to its solicitations, not by conforming to its customs; but by a holy life adorning the doctrine of Christ, and by a well ordered conversation that shall set forth the beauty of religion, and the power of divine grace. There is work enough for every hour—work that is its own reward. Life is too precious

and too short to be wasted in idleness and folly.

“Wake thou that sleepest in enchanted bowers,  
Lest thy lost years should haunt thee in the night,  
When death is waiting for thy numbered hours,  
To take their swift and everlasting flight.  
Wake ere the earth-born charms unnerve thee quite,  
And be thy thoughts to work divine addressed.  
Do something—do it soon with all thy might,  
An angel’s wing would droop if long at rest.”

An earnest and whole hearted devotion to the work of the Christian, flowing from communion with God in the closet, and from a simple faith in Christ and his promises, will soon make every pleasure distasteful to you that is unworthy your nature and your calling. It will bring you up to a higher enjoyment than this world can afford. Christ calls you forth to earnest labour, in which he proffers you

his own grace to assist you, and his own presence to go with you. He points you to a world lying in sin, and says, Go, work to-day in my vineyard. He enrolls your names among his soldiers, and as he points you to the enemy with whom you are to contend, he bids you go forth in his strength and conquer.

Look forth upon the field that lies before you. Is there time for trifling with such a work pressing upon you? Shall not the love of Christ constrain you? Shall you not follow in his steps, and, impelled by his wondrous example, go forth to spread the triumphs of the cross? You live in an age that peculiarly demands earnestness and zeal on the part of the church. On every hand calls are made for labourers to enter the fields that are

whitening to the harvest. The Bible and the tract are to be circulated amid the ignorant and the destitute. Neglected and outcast children are to be sought out and gathered into Sabbath-schools. The poor and the afflicted are to be visited in the abodes of wretchedness, and comforted and relieved. You may, in all the varied departments of Christian benevolence, exert an influence that shall be felt for good in years and generations to come. It may not be your lot to preach the gospel at home or abroad; but you may find heathen at your very doors, and, carrying to them the gracious message of mercy, may awaken some heart to a knowledge of the truth, and so save a soul from death and hide a multitude of sins.

What a work is this—to lead a sin-

ner to Christ—to be the instrument of his salvation—to awaken him to a sense of his guilt, and to direct him to the fountain where all his sins may be blotted out—to set in motion a train of blessed influences which shall pass on to the eternal world and be for ever a source of joy and thanksgiving! What an honour is this—to be a co-worker with God—to be made his instrument in carrying on his gracious purposes towards this lost world! What a high and glorious vocation is this—to be the soldier of the great Captain of our salvation—nay, to be a king and priest unto God! Shall aught be permitted to come between you and the solemn duties and responsibilities of your high calling? Oh! remember that you have been brought into the church and made partakers of Christ, for



higher and holier purposes than the service of self and sensual gratification and enjoyment.

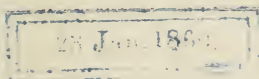
Ye are not your own. In the kingdom of God, no man liveth to himself. The voice of your divine Leader summons you forth to the work of life. His providence marks it out plainly before you. His word directs you how you, may both glorify God and enjoy him for ever. His Spirit is given you, that you may find strength and grace to help in time of need. His example is before you, that you may follow in his steps. His promises are set forth to lead you on where sight and sense are bidding you hesitate and falter, and sit down in discouragement and despondency.

Here is not your rest; though all along the path you tread, refreshment

and comfort are provided, and springs of heavenly consolation well forth at your side. In all times of danger, or when heart and flesh fail, God is your refuge and strength. The feeblest prayer, if uttered in faith, shall bring you quick relief. The ear of Him who is mighty to save is ever open to your cry. In the great conflict of life you may sometimes feel that you war not with flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers; yet clad in heavenly armour, and girded with the grace of Christ, you shall come off more than conqueror. And when your work is done, and, saved by the grace and washed in the blood of the Lamb, you rise to the full enjoyment of his love, you shall all walk in white, and sweep your harps to notes of praise and thanksgiving unto him who hath

redeemed you to God by his blood, and given you the victory over sin and the world, and permitted you to shine as the stars among those who turn many to righteousness.

THE END.













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